

Clubhouse by ticklishraspberries

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Summary:

The Losers are all hanging out in the clubhouse. The usual antics ensue.

Clubhouse

Richie was laying in the clubhouse hammock, a cigarette between his teeth and a comic book sprawled across his lap, although his attention seemed to be on anything but the words on its pages.

“You know,” Eddie spoke up, shooting him a sideways glance, “you really shouldn’t smoke in here. You’ll gas us all to fuckin’ death.”

Richie shot him puppy dog eyes, his pout causing the aforementioned cigarette to bob between his lips. “Hey, why are you pickin’ on me, Eds? Bev smokes in here all the time, and you never nag her!”

Bev, caught in the middle of pulling her pack of Marlboro’s from her back pocket shot Eddie a sheepish smile.

“At least she stands by the door and blows the smoke out,” Eddie grumbled, a little embarrassed, caught in the act of picking specifically on Richie, probably for the third or fourth time that week. Anyone else would assume it was out of genuine, secret hatred for him, but the losers all knew better, and Stan knew better than anyone, always having been quite observational when it came to his friends, and he gave a small smile to no one in particular at the scene.

Mike caught the smile from the corner of his eyes, and it made a little lightbulb go off in his head. Bill and Ben, however, were engrossed in a game of cards that had lasted far too long, leaving them oblivious to the blatant flirting just a few steps away from where they sat, but it was so commonplace, they’d probably catch it next time.

“Rich, toss me your lighter?” Bev asked, holding out her hands, ready to catch.

Richie fumbled in his pocket for the little green lighter he’d snagged from his science teacher’s desk. It was way more convenient than carrying around matches. He tossed it in Bev’s direction, not a great throw, but she managed to catch it anyway with her quick reflexes, giving him a nod of thanks.

She climbed halfway up the ladder of the clubhouse, sitting on the rung as she lit the end of her cigarette, tilting her head to blow the smoke up to the sky, just like Eddie had said she did.

“See?” Eddie said, gesturing vaguely in her direction before smacking lightly at Richie’s thigh.

Richie chuckled, holding his slowly dying cigarette out in Eddie’s direction. “Oh, lighten up, Eds! A cig would probably make you act less like you’ve got a stick up your ass,” he teased.

Eddie scowled. “I don’t have a stick up my ass, I’ve got *asthma* , fuckhead.”

That only made Richie laugh harder. “I’m just teasin’ Eddie-Spaghetti, no need to get your panties in a bunch!”

“Rich, be nice!” Bev scolded, although she was giggling as she said it.

Eddie gave her a thankful smile, before turning to glare at his other friends. “At least *Bev* is nice to me,” he said pointedly.

Bill shot him an innocent grin. “You’re a b-big boy, Eds, w-we know you can ha-handle yourself.”

Eddie flipped him the bird, but they all knew it was all in good fun.

Richie, suddenly worried that he’d actually upset Eddie and therefore trying to make up for his dickhead behavior, sat up in the hammock. “Want a turn, Eddie?”

“Sit your ass back down, Trashmouth, we both fit in it just fine. Just put that thing out so I don’t wheeze all over you.”

And Richie, for once, listened.

Eddie clambered into the hammock, their knees bumping together as he got comfortable, and he didn’t notice the way Richie’s freckled cheeks flushed.

The knowing smiles of the others quickly resurfaced, unnoticed by the two boys who were pressed unnecessarily close together.

Bev put out her own cigarette, walking by the hammock to slide the lighter into Richie's breast pocket with a wink. He offered her a goofy grin in return as she strolled across the tiny clubhouse, plopping down on the bench beside Ben, a newfound curiosity in her eyes as she watched the game unfold.

Ben's demeanor changed instantly, his eyes widening and his cheeks turning pink as he sat up a little straighter. How funny, that Beverly could so clearly see the love that Richie and Eddie had for one another, and yet remained oblivious to Ben's love for her, and her own feelings, too.

Eddie shifted uncomfortably, kicking at Richie gently. "You're too fuckin' tall for this thing."

"You're the one who said that we'd fit!"

"Yeah, cause I forgot that you're a fuckin' beanpole."

"Or maybe you're just tiny."

Eddie kicked him a little harder, but still not enough to actually hurt. "Asshole."

Adopting a dainty, feminine sort of Voice, Richie batted his lashes behind thick coke-bottle glasses, a hand resting over his heart. "Aw, shucks, I love ya too, Eds!"

Blushing up to the tips of his ears, Eddie set his jaw and lunged forward, fingers rapidly poking at Richie's belly, causing the other boy to cry out in laughter.

"Cut it out!" he giggled, squirming in a way that caused the hammock to tilt dangerously, but even the potential fall didn't deter Eddie from tickling him, sticking his hands into Richie's armpits and smirking triumphantly when Richie threw his head back and *cackled*.

Mike pretended to eye the ceiling warily, commenting that Richie's laugh "could bring the whole clubhouse down" with its volume.

It was such a stupid act, but Eddie wasn't keen on stopping any time soon, equal parts mischief and fondness sparkling in his brown eyes

as he watched Richie's face scrunch up, slowly getting more and more flushed by the second, and how his glasses sat askew on the bridge of his nose.

"You're gonna give *him* an asthma attack!" Stan called. "Let him breathe, Eddie."

After giving his knees a few quick squeezes, Eddie relented, albeit begrudgingly. Who could blame him, though? Richie's smile was too goddamn adorable, and he always snorted when he laughed too hard, which made Eddie's heart skip a beat.

"You're a menace," Richie breathed, flopping back against the hammock. He was red all over, whether from the lack of oxygen, or having Eddie's hands all over him, although a mix of the two was the most likely answer.

"You deserved it," Eddie replied, sticking out his tongue.

Ben turned to Bev, who was still sitting beside him. "Do they ever stop?" he asked rhetorically.

Grinning, Bev shook her head. "They're like an old married couple," she replied, nudging Ben in the ribs with her elbow, and pointed out the card in his hand that would help him win the game. He hadn't noticed it previously, probably because she was distracting him with her mere presence.

He played the card, and Bill groaned over his loss, but he hadn't seen Bev's little tip, and therefore lacked the authority to call rematch by reason of conspiracy. Plus, his brain was beginning to feel numb from how long they'd been playing, and taking a loss was less torture than sitting through another round.

Ben shot Bev a smile, and she returned it, feeling something flutter within her chest, although she wasn't quite sure what. Stan and Mike switched places with Ben and Bill to try their hand at playing, leaving the others to spectate that game.

Over in the hammock, Richie was uncharacteristically quiet, nibbling on his bottom lip. Perhaps the very one-sided tickle fight had left him

tired, or the proximity to Eddie had stunned him speechless.

Eddie had at some point snatched his comic book and was reading it himself, so Richie took to watching him. Although his face was hidden behind the brightly colored cover, there was so much to not only observe, but admire.

The way his small fingers curled around the pages, and the light smattering of freckles that dotted his forearms and knees, or how his hair fell in waves atop his head—

“What are you staring at?”

Eddie’s question startled him out of his daze. “Not staring, just daydreaming,” Richie quipped back.

“About what?”

“Oh, you know, the usual. Just big ol’ Mrs. K’s nightgown comin’ up over her head,” Richie replied in a sort-of-cockney accent, grinning from ear to ear.

Eddie threw the comic book to the floor, lunging forward yet again to tickle Richie to tears, calling him all sorts of names over the sound of his howling laughter.

The other losers all shook their heads, or rolled their eyes, or some other gesture that screamed annoyed-yet-fond. It was just a normal afternoon in their clubhouse, full of light, laughter, and love.